

Message Text

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ACTION AF-04

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ADP-00 NSC-10 NSCE-00 INR-09 CIAE-00

NSAE-00 PM-03 DODE-00 L-02 PRS-01 RSR-01 RSC-01 OPR-01

SY-02 SSO-00 /049 W

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R 301658 Z MAR 73

FM AMEMBASSY MONROVIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7637

S E C R E T MONROVIA 1613

LIMDIS

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PFOR LI

SUBJECT: COUP PLOT: GOVERNMENT ACTIONS

REF: MONROVIA 1612

1. AS NOTED REFTEL LACK OF CLEAR- CUT GOVERNMENT STATEMENT ADDING TO WORRY OF CITIZENS HERE AND ASSISTING IN SPREAD OF RUMORS. BASED ON SOURCES WITHIN US MILITARY MISSION AND FRS, AS WELL AS EMBASSY CONTACTS WE HAVE OBTAINED FOLLOWING ON GOVERNMENT ACTIVITIES. PRESIDENT HAS APPOINTED AD HOC COMMITTEE, HEADED BY JUSTICE MINISTER SIMPSON AND INCLUDING MINISTER OF DEFENSE WILLIAMS AND CHIEF OF SECURITY SERVICE BAKER TO CONDUCT INVESTIGATION. IN SPITE OF EARLIER AND PROBABLY UNFOUNDED REFERENCES TO FOREIGN GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENT, WE BELIEVE PRESIDENT TOLBERT HAS CLEAR UNDERSTANDING THIS EMBASSY PLAYED NO ROLE DURING PERIOD OF PLOTTING AND NO WAY SUSPECTS US OF ANY COMPLICITY.

2. MILITARY MISSION REPORTS ARMED FORCES SEEM CALM AND NOT OVERTLY UPSET OVER EVENTS. DEPUTATION OF SENIOR OFFICERS VISITED EXECUTIVE MANSION MORNING MARCH 29 TO PRESENT PRESIDENT WITH STATEMENT OF LOYALTY TO GOVERNMENT. MISSION ALSO HAS HEARD NEW
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ASSISTANT MINISTER FOR COAST GUARD AFFAIRS WILL PROBABLY BE SYLVESTER J. THOMAS, PRESENTLY ASSISTANT MINISTER IN MINISTRY OF LABOR AND YOUTH.

3. LT COL SAYDEE AND LT COL KPARDEH WERE ON DAY FOLLOWING ARREST DISMISSED FROM ARMED SERVICES BUT HAVE SUBSEQUENTLY BEEN REINSTATED IN ORDER TO STAND COURT MARTIAL. IN THIS CONTEXT AFL USES US CODE OF MILITARY JUSTICE. CHARGES HAVE NOT BEEN STATED BUT MAY WELL BE TREASON. WE UNDERSTAND GOL WAS CONTEMPLATING COURT MARTIALING PRINCE BROWNE SINCE HE IS LT COL IN MILITIA BUT HAVE NOW DECIDED PROSECUTE HIM IN CIVILIAN COURT AT DATE AS YET UNKNOWN TO US.

4. ALSO ON THURSDAY, MARCH 29, BROWNE'S HOUSE WAS SEARCHED AND SUBMACHINE GUN AND CARBINE WITH SMALL AMOUNTS OF AMMUNITION FOR EACH DISCOVERED. SUBMACHINE GUN WAS WITHDRAWN BY BROWNE FROM COAST GUARD ARMORY AT EARLIER DATE.

5. GOL HAS ALSO ISSUED ORDERS TO COL VICTOR STEWART, NOW IN US FOR ORIENTATION, TO RETURN IMMEDIATELY, PRESUMABLY TO SERVE AS WITNESS AND ALSO BECAUSE HIS WIFE HAS BEEN RECEIVING ANONYMOUS THREATENING PHONE CALLS.

6. GOVERNMENT IS OBVIOUSLY FACED WITH HIGHLY DELICATE

PROBLEM - HOW TO HANDLE CASE? HOW PRESIDENT WILL HANDLE SITUATION, AND IT WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY BE HE WHO MAKES DECISIONS, IS CRITICAL. OVER- REACTION COULD MAKE PLOT APPEAR MORE SERIOUS THAN IT REALLY IS AND MIGHT ALIENATE TRIBAL ELEMENTS (ALL THREE DETAINEES ARE TRIBAL). REACTION COULD EQUALLY IMPLY TO SAME GROUP THAT GOVERNMENT CANNOT CONTAIN SITUATION AND GIVE THEM FALSE SENSE OF CONFIDENCE. MOREOVER, IT IS IN GOVERNMENT'S INTERESTS LIMIT PUBLICITY WHICH CAN ONLY LOOK BAD ABROAD.
MANFULL

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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** LIMDIS

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